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1961-02-15, Bette to Parents

Bette J. Barto

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Subject Terms

Women and the military, Women and war, United States -- Air Force, United States -- Army -- Air Forces, Photographs, Armed Forces -- Correspondence, Correspondence -- Vietnam War -- 1961-1975, Christmas

Summary

This collection contains 139 correspondence from Maj. Bette J. Barto, USAFE to her parents while serving as a nurse during the late 1950s and 1960s. Also included are three photographs, one special orders document, and one marriage license. In several cases, Bette refers to her parents as "Lizzie" and "Hugh Elmer," or simply "Elmer." Three letters from 1961 or 1962 are undated and placed in a separate folder.

Keywords

1961-02-15

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15 February 61.

6^{pm} Wednesday

Hi Mom and Daddy,

This may be a scratchy note. I'm in the middle of a washing upstairs, so I'll have to run, when I think it's time to put my things in the dryer. These two pieces of equipment are really busy most of the time, what with two full floors of bachelor girls and boys using them.

Ray is watching the Lone Ranger while he rests a few minutes after a busy day's work. He hasn't been doing much flying but he is more worn out when he doesn't than when he does - bored, I imagine.

I broke down and wrote Helen a short note about nothing last night. We got a lovely Valentine from her and Joey. I couldn't find a good one for her Saturday when I remembered Valentine's Day, so I didn't get one at all. I'm a flop as a letter writer, I guess.

We are #3 on the housing list still, but that's close. We keep hoping for a miracle. My things haven't arrived from Africa anyway, but if the house comes up, we will make up. It will be so nice to have closet space and a home of our own.

I'm really enjoying my job. I don't work as hard as I had to at Hughes, but the work is so easy

to clean up and the equipment is plentiful. I can ask for things and get them. I'm still busy trying to get my supplies cleared out and re-arranged, but it's coming along nicely.

The nurses will move into their fancy new apartment-type quarters behind the hospital this weekend. Then I'll be the only girl in this B.O.Z. - but who cares? I never see anyone anyway - off duty.

I'm very proud of my husband today, for a very special reason. He received a Commendation Letter, a very coveted item, for his very exemplary handling of his job as aerial judge at the gunnery meet in Nevada in September. It was signed by no less than 3 generals, 2 colonels, and a major. These go a long way toward promotion, when someone that high-ranking takes the time to sit down and thank you on paper for a job well done. He also has received a beautiful Officer Effective Rating from his present Commanding Officer for this first 6 mo. here. These are the ways we advance in rank. He is a good officer, and I'm so happy someone is finally realizing something of his value. He certainly had no thanks for his work in N. Africa, as neither did I. Well, that's all over!

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It's so wonderful to be back in the states. The weather is getting nicer and it smells so good here among these pines - instead of camel dung and Arab out houses (outdoor toilets - no roofs, that is).

We drove 12 miles south of here Sunday afternoon to visit these friends of ours - a Major & his wife & 8 Boys (all under 16) !!! We planted the tops of our Perseradiak roots in their back-yard, sat and watched their kids play and chase squirrels in the yard, and came home. It's really beautiful country.

The Congo situation is really getting desperate. I'm happy to be home, because no one knows how soon it will spread to N. Africa. Only wish Mary & Anne & the ~~other~~ kids were home, too. It may not be too long before Ray will be back over there for a short time - someone has to deliver these aircraft to the squadron's overseas who need them, and who don't know how to fly them.

Guess what we are going to do? We are signing up for a garden plot on base. They have a large area about a block from the hospital for truck gardens. We want to raise our own vegetables! If you and Daddy have any tools to spare w'd love to have them - if not, will buy some when

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we decide what will need. They
show the first time for us. Then
we're on our own.

Don't plan on it for certain, Mom
& Daddy, but I have 3 days off
on March. 10-11-12. If Ray can get
Friday the 10th off, too. We may try
to come to K'ville to get a load
of stuff. If we can get our house
by then, of course, we'd have to stay
here and move then, but keep the
date in mind. — But Mom, if you
are thinking of going to see Helen,
Joy & the kids, go on, because
it may be that we can't come
then — it's only a possibility.

I'll send you a copy of our first
orders to come out on the same
page. Everyone got a kick out of
2 Capt. Barto's — many of Ray's
enlisted men didn't know he'd
married a nurse. They gave
him a fit over who outranked
whom!

I must quit & get supper on. We
are having Steak & - stew & apple
sauce. That's all — we are limited
as to the number of things we
can plug in at one time.

Write. Love M. Hope your
shoulder's better, Daddy. Mom,
what did Dr. Davis say about your
arm pain? Daddy, write again. We
enjoyed your letter. Love Betty,